## Universal Design for Learning

The goal of education in the 21st century is not simply the mastery of content knowledge or use of new technologies. It is the mastery of the learning process. Education should help turn novice learners into expert learners—individuals who want to learn, who know how to learn strategically, and who, in their own highly individual and flexible ways, are well prepared for a lifetime of learning. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) helps educators meet this goal by providing a framework for understanding how to create [curricula](http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlcurriculum) that meets the needs of all learners from the start.

The UDL Guidelines, an articulation of the UDL framework, can assist anyone who plans lessons/units of study or develops curricula (goals, methods, materials, and assessments) to reduce barriers, as well as optimize levels of challenge and support, to meet the needs of all learners from the start. They can also help educators identify the barriers found in existing curricula. However, to fully understand these Guidelines one must first understand [what UDL is](http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl).

**Universal Design for Learning** is not the "same old thing" in a new package. Rather, UDL is a truly innovative way of thinking about teaching, learning, and design. UDL applies the idea of built-in flexibility to education and curriculum. UDL minimizes barriers and maximizes learning for all students.

Universal Design for Learning **is based on three Principles:** Multiple means of Representation, Multiple Means of Expression, and Multiple Means of Engagement. It encourages and supports improved access to information within classrooms, and improved access to learning.

Universal design can be viewed as a philosophical approach for designing curriculum, shaping instruction, selecting instructional materials/technology and developing assessments that provide greater access to learning for all students.

The UDL principles include:

The What of Learning-Multiple and Flexible Means of **Presenting** what is to be Learned-**Representation**

The How of Learning-Multiple and Flexible Means of **Demonstrating** what was Learned-**Expression**

The Why of Learning-Multiple and Flexible means of **Engaging** the Learner in what is to be Learned: **Engagement**

# Connection to Technology

Our thinking is dramatically changing and must continue to do so. New technologies are challenging our concepts of learning, media, the learner, and teaching and learning. Educational technologies will change the learning goals, the teaching methods, and the means of assessment for all students.

**The result of new technologies will be a re-centering of the core agenda of schools on learning instead of content.** The ultimate educational goals will no longer be about the mastery of content (content will be available everywhere, anytime, electronically) but about the mastery of learning. Students will be expert learners who use technology to overcome weaknesses. Students will be given all possible options to meet the variability within the classroom. As a result, they will be prepared for a changing world, one in which learning is continuous and lifelong.

# UDL is connected to Brain Research

It is how the brain works and how learners learn that is significant to teachers and teaching. The three brain networks that are connected and work together that are essential to learning are the recognition, strategic, and affective networks. All brains share these characteristics but individual brains differ significantly. This has important implications for teaching.

In schools today, the mix of students is more diverse than ever. Educators are challenged to teach all kinds of learners to high standards. Teachers want their students to succeed but a one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn’t work. Current brain research has identified three distinct learning networks in the brain: **recognition, strategic and affective**. This has significant implications for classroom practices. How can we connect what we know about the brain to what we have learned about learning as we seek a solution to high achievement for all students? The UDL connects brain research to learning research and is fueling a conversation regarding how we meet the needs of our most challenged learners.

**The What of Learning: Recognition Network (Representation)**

The gathering of information takes place in this section of the brain, how we identify what we see, hear, and read.

**The How of Learning: Strategic Network (Action and Expression)**

Planning and performing tasks and how we organize and express our ideas takes place here.

**The Why of Learning:**

How are students engaged and motivated, how they are challenged, excited or interested.

*Universal Design for Learning is designed to maximize learning for all. To do that teachers need to present or* ***represent*** *information in a variety of ways, students need to show what they know through multiple means of* ***expression****, and as we all know, students need to be* ***engaged****.* Therefore, what we are talking about is a common language for differentiation.

Specifically UDL is about providing :

* + multiple and flexible methods of presentation to give students various ways of getting information and knowledge,
  + multiple and flexible means of expression to enable students to demonstrate what they know,
  + multiple and flexible means of engagement to challenge and motivate students to learn.
  + Open link to:

<http://192.220.23.189/drop/HCPSS> a wheel version developed by HCPS and MSDE

Phone APPS

* <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/udlinks/id454517781?mt=8>
* <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.hcpss.UDL>

AND….

* [UDL Make your own wheel](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/hiat/training/collab_cycle/day1handouts/UDLWheel.pdf)

For more information

<http://www.cast.org/udl/>